

XXXVIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "To the Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRS,—I have just returned from three months' leave (17th May to 8th July), during which I have visited the Kághán Valley, the most northern strip of British India, and I think that my experiences there as regards bird-life may be of some interest to your readers.

This valley is about 100 miles long by 15 broad on the average, varying in altitude from 3000 feet at the entrance to 17,360 feet at its highest peak. In fauna and flora, as well as in scenery, it closely resembles Kashmir, which bounds it on the west. Altogether some 150 species of birds were met with, but as most of my time was spent at levels of above 10,000 feet, many others must have been found if I had been at lower altitudes. The following are some of the more interesting species:—

Ægithaliscus niveigularis (rare). *Hodgsonius phænicuroides* (rather scarce). *Acrocephalus agricola* (common from 8000 feet to 10,000 feet, in patches of *Sambucus ebulus*, in which it was nesting, often a long way from water). *Ruticilla frontalis* and *R. rufiventris* (both fairly common, especially the latter). *Merula maxima* (nesting freely in juniper-scrub). *Accentor rufilatus* (scarce). *Pycnorhamphus carneipes* and *Propasser dubius* (a few pairs met with). *Pyrrhospiza punicea* (rare). *Carpodacus erythrinus* (abundant: some males were breeding in immature plumage). *Anthus maculatus* (common above 11,000 feet: Oates has not recorded it west of the River Sutlej). *Motacilla citreoloides* (abundant: about half the pairs were breeding in immature plumage; it does not therefore assume full plumage at its first spring moult). *Otocorys longirostris* (fairly numerous at the head of the valley, several nests were found). *Aquila chrysaëtus* (the common Eagle above 10,000 feet). *Spizaëtus limnaëtus* (I found one sitting on a single dried-up egg, and shot her for identification).

Lerwa nivicola (common locally, a most amusing and confiding bird).

Yours &c.,

C. H. T. WHITEHEAD.

Sehore, Bhopal, India,
12th Aug., 1909.

SIRS,—At the meeting of the B. O. Club held on 26th May, 1909, I exhibited an adult male specimen of *Muscicapa semitorquata* as being new to the Egyptian avifauna. In the report of that meeting (Bull. B. O. C. vol. xxiii. p. 93) I am credited with having exhibited a specimen of *M. collaris* as new to Egypt! I need hardly point out that the Collared Flycatcher (*Muscicapa collaris*) is a regular visitor to Egypt during the spring migration (*cf.* Shelley's 'Birds of Egypt,' p. 130).

In his 'Manual of Palæarctic Birds' (p. 256) Mr. Dresser includes *M. semitorquata* as a subspecies of *M. collaris*. It is really, however, in my opinion, a subspecies of *M. atricapilla*. In fact, adult males of *M. semitorquata* (or, as I prefer to call it, *M. atricapilla semitorquata*) only differ from those of *M. atricapilla atricapilla* in having the sides of the neck white (these white patches almost form a collar round the hind-neck), and in having a small white speculum on the wing. The amount of white on the tail is the same in both *M. a. atricapilla* and *M. a. semitorquata*—*i. e.*, white on the outer and inner webs of the first and second pairs, and white on the outer web only of the third pair of rectrices, whereas in *M. collaris* the white is restricted to the outer web of the first pair. Young males of *M. collaris* have no white on the tail at all, whereas in *M. atricapilla* young birds have the outer web of the first three pairs of rectrices white.

Yours &c.,

MICHAEL J. NICOLL.

Giza, Egypt,
1st August, 1909.

SIRS,—Probably some of the readers of 'The Ibis' are aware that I have been engaged, from time to time as

opportunity allowed, on a new and greatly improved edition of my 'Nomenclature of Colors' (1886). I am happy to be able to announce that, after twenty years of necessarily intermittent labour, this most difficult and tedious task has at last been accomplished, and that arrangements have been made for its early publication, the Plates being already in process of reproduction.

The new work will present nearly 1350 colours, arranged scientifically and reproduced by a method which guarantees a faithful copy of the originals as to hue and tone—in fact, absolute uniformity throughout the entire edition,—and at the same time as great a degree of permanency as is possible with pigments now known to colourists. The standard of the original work is, of course, retained and as many additional colours are named as practicable. Obviously it is impossible to provide names for all of so large a number of colours; but those which are left unnamed may be easily designated by an exceedingly simple system of symbols, as may also the intermediates, both as to hue and tone. This renders the work practically equivalent to the actual presentation of more than 5300 named or otherwise designable colour-samples. In short, the work has been so carefully planned and executed that I have no doubt as to its adequacy to meet all the demands of naturalists and others who have use for a comprehensive colour-nomenclature and standards. The new edition will be of the same size (except for a slightly greater thickness, there being 64 plates instead of the 10 of the old edition), and will be sold for about \$5.00 net, or only \$1.00 more than the original work.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

ROBERT RIDGWAY.

Washington,
Sept. 9th, 1909.

The B. O. U. Expedition for the Exploration of Central New Guinea.—Mr. Walter Goodfellow, the Leader of the proposed "B. O. U. Jubilee Exploration of the Charles-Louis Mountains," returned to England on Aug. 6th with a good collection of living Paradise-birds, amongst which were